

LAND VALUE TAXATION AND TARIFFS

Lord Snowden's Advice to Free Traders

Sir Herbert Samuel's Support

Speaking on 1st December at a Luncheon in the Victoria Hotel, London, organized by the Joint Free Trade Committee, Viscount Snowden said (*Manchester Guardian* report):—

Mr. Neville Chamberlain has often asked us, "Where would you get your revenue from to compensate for the withdrawal of the Customs duties that we have imposed?" I will tell you. I will ask Mr Chamberlain to take a drive with me over the suburbs and every large and small town in the country and through country districts and I will point out to him there thousands and tens of thousands of acres, valueless a few years ago, which have now become a gold mine to the fortunate owners of these lands.

I know of no greater monument to the stupidity and the patience of the British people than that they will allow an iniquitous system like the enrichment of private landowners out of the industry, enterprise, and expenditure of the public to continue. My advice is that to carry out Cobden's declaration Free Trade is not the only aim. Having accomplished that we must turn to the destruction of an equally pernicious monopoly, and that is a protected system of land ownership. That would be my advice to you—to continue our ordinary Free Trade propaganda and to link with it the removal of Protection in a form which is vicious. Free Trade means the abolition of Protection and of monopoly, and we shall continue that task confident that in the end truth and righteousness will prevail.

This declaration was quoted, in part, in the *Evening Standard* and the *News-Chronicle*, but *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, in their reports of the meeting, failed to make any reference to it. It was neatly cut out from the speech.

Sir Herbert Samuel, following Lord Snowden, passed over this cogent advice to Free Traders, until a direct question was put to him asking where he stood. The incident is thus reported in the *Manchester Guardian*:—

An interesting point in the speeches was Lord Snowden's outline of an alternative method of raising revenue, and in the course of it he advocated taxation of land values. This aroused the dissent of a guest, who, later, when Sir Herbert Samuel also advocated a positive policy for Free Traders, interjected: "Not the taxation of land values." Sir Herbert Samuel replied that this was a matter of controversy, but for his part he was entirely with Lord Snowden on the question.

In other papers the interruption was noted as that of a supporter of Land Value Taxation—someone had heckled Sir Herbert—but the "London Diarist" in the *New Statesman and Nation* thought like the *Manchester Guardian* reporter, treated the interjection as hostile to the policy. The matter was explained in a letter to the newspapers named, the *Manchester Guardian* (9th December) publishing most of it while the full text appeared in the *New Statesman and Nation* of 17th December:—

SIR,—As the interrupter at the Free Trade luncheon in London, referred to this week in your "London Diary," may I give my version of the incident? The interruption came at the close of Sir Herbert Samuel's speech. Lord Snowden had urged Free

Traders to link up Free Trade with the overthrow of land monopoly, and to point to land values as the source of public revenue, replacing the revenue derived from tariffs. That was his answer to Mr. Neville Chamberlain. Sir Herbert Samuel in his speech proceeded to make his own reply to Mr Chamberlain. He contended that tariffs dried up the "ordinary sources" of revenue and if tariff restrictions were removed business would so benefit that the ordinary sources would again supply the revenue the country had lost.

Sir Herbert Samuel went on to lay down a positive policy for Free Traders in their fight against Protection—to work for the reorganization of industry and agriculture for the establishment of smallholdings and for giving a lead toward the formation of a group of low-tariff countries.

It was here that the interjection came as an ironical question, "But not the Taxation of Land Values?" Sir Herbert Samuel, as reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, gave the reply that he was entirely with Lord Snowden on this question. He added that it was a matter of controversy. Surely, however, Lord Snowden's point was that Free Traders should have no hesitation in insisting on the removal of all restrictions and monopolies as the one complete and unanswerable reply to the protectionists. It is the opportunity for Free Traders to preach all-round freedom and give freedom a chance.

I cannot claim your space for the remaining anxieties of an anxious Free Trader waiting for the Radical word—except to say that the plea for advantages attaching to a low-tariff group of countries sounds very strange. It seems to me to be Ottawa all over again, with more haggling and bargaining, more discrimination, more ill-will, or even greater menace to world peace, and the consumer effectively held to ransom. Arrangements of this kind are worse than the tariffs themselves.

A. W. MADSEN.

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We have Sir Herbert Samuel's word for it, that Land Value Taxation is the reply to the Tariff mongers, and Free Traders are urged to relate the freedom of production with the freedom of exchange. Radical sentiment in the country has waited eagerly for this lead; but it is still withheld in the most responsible quarters. We look in the *Liberal Magazine* (January) in vain for any reference to these important declarations at the Free Trade Luncheon. A special article discusses "Tariffs and Revenue." It attempts to answer the question "What would be your alternative source of revenue?" and this message to Liberalism not only omits any mention of Land Value Taxation, but calls for increased excise on sugar, increased tobacco duties, and the advocacy of indirect taxes "for revenue only" that has brought the Free Trade cause to its present desperate pass. *The Liberal Magazine answers the Tariff mongers with a plea for excise duties to be imposed on the home production of goods protected by the McKenna and the Safeguarding Duties.* According to this offering there is no revenue rightfully belonging to the Community. Are the Liberal Free Traders to leave it at that?

Protection or Free Trade, by HENRY GEORGE, has been named by Lord Snowden as "The most popular and the most scientific exposition of the subject that has ever been written." Cloth, 1s. Paper Covers, 6d. Write for our special Post Free Terms for a dozen or a hundred at a time.